



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## More Kids Drug Free

Eau Claire, WI – September 30, 2014 – October is a big month and it's all about More Kids Drug Free!

- ❖ It's National Substance Abuse Prevention Month
- ❖ We just received \$625,000 of DFC funding
- ❖ The More Kids Drug Free campaign is rolling out.

**National Substance Abuse Prevention Month** is an observance that highlights the role of our Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention (Alliance) in promoting safe and healthy Eau Claire County communities. Formed in 2002, the Alliance is a community coalition of people from all walks of life who want to see more kids drug free. Over the past 10 years, the primary focus of the Alliance has been on reducing underage drinking with impressive results. Local data indicates that 1500 fewer youth report drinking alcohol than 10 years ago. This is especially significant because most alcohol and other drug problems start at an early age and negatively impact health and safety for a lifetime.

**The Alliance recently received a Drug Free Communities Program (DFC) grant award of \$625,000** to continue its important work to reduce youth drinking and other drug use. The philosophy behind the DFC Program is that local alcohol and other drug problems require local solutions planned and implemented collaboratively by community members. The Eau Claire City-County Health Department will serve as the fiscal agent for this five-year grant that starts today. The Alliance is required to match all DFC funding by 100% which will increase to 150% in the last two years of the grant. DFC funding will enable the Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention in Eau Claire County to move forward, but at a minimal level and will require additional funding to meet community needs.

To effectively reduce youth substance use, the Alliance has brought people together countywide and continually invites people to:

Connect parents: Bonnie Nicolai, an Eau Claire parent, says "the Parents Connecting Network has helped my family discuss why all underage drinking is unacceptable and how our children will be held accountable."

Support youth: Brie Dillon, a Memorial student, says "the Alliance supports all the high school SADD groups (students against destructive decisions) to plan and carryout awareness campaigns at school events. We find peer to peer messages to be an effective way to reach youth about the dangers of getting drunk or high."

Create safer social environments: Captain Dan Bresina says "The ECC Sheriff's Office has partnered with the Alliance over the past 10 years to make alcohol less available to youth. Working together, many social environments where alcohol is served are now safer. Law enforcement appreciates the substantial contributions made by the Alliance to public safety."

Improve health: Ken Van Es, Director of the Eau Claire YMCA, says “The Alliance is doing the important work to curb underage drinking and other drug use in Eau Claire County. The Y has partnered with the Alliance to further improve the health of our youth and greater community.”

Prescription drug misuse is a growing problem in Eau Claire County and will be an additional focus of the Alliance over the next five years. Catherine Lea, a Mayo Clinic Health System Pharmacist, states she is pleased that the Alliance will focus on raising awareness among youth and adults about the importance of securing their prescribed medications and the harmfulness of taking someone else’s medication.

Bruce King, an Eau Claire parent, says “The Alliance involves parents in reducing youth drinking and other drug use which is critical. Their ‘Start Talking’ campaign encourages parents to discuss the dangers of alcohol and other drug use with their children at an early age and offers resources to assist parents in having these important conversations.”

**The Alliance is kicking off their new campaign *More Kids Drug Free*** in conjunction with National Substance Abuse Prevention Month that begins October 1<sup>st</sup>. We will be on social networks and local media throughout October, so please tune in and share what we are doing with your friends, families and coworkers. It’s an awareness campaign to share the many ways youth are affected by alcohol and other drug use and the importance of seeing ***More Kids Drug Free***.

Currently, the Alliance is operating at a minimal level and will need to increase local support to meet the grant match requirement. We ask the community to please consider volunteering and/or making a financial contribution. The campaign goal is \$100,000. Joe Luginbill, Campaign Chair, says “An investment in this campaign is a direct investment in our fantastic community and its continued health and safety. By stepping up and making a donation, you will be making a real difference in the lives of many.”

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The mission of the Alliance is to improve the lives of children, youth and adults by mobilizing communities to prevent and treat alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse in Eau Claire County. To learn more about the Alliance programs and ways to get involved, visit [www.getinvolvedASAP.org](http://www.getinvolvedASAP.org)

